

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 000639

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, IO/SHA, WHA/CCA, DRL/MLA; NSC
FOR E. MILLARD

LONDON FOR POL/RIEDEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04-11-13

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [CE](#) [CU](#) [UNCHR](#)

SUBJECT: Foreign Secretary indicates that GSL plans to
abstain re Cuba resolution, but will review matter

Refs: (A) Colombo 626

- (B) State 91613
- (C) State 91349 (All Notal)

(U) Classified by Ambassador E. Ashley Wills.
Reasons: 1.5 (b,d).

1. (C) Following up on his conversation with
FM Fernando yesterday (see Ref A), Ambassador Wills
spoke to Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary Nihal Rodrigo
today (April 11) re the resolution on Cuba now before
the UNCHR. Rodrigo said the GSL's current plan was to
abstain on the vote while issuing a "strong" statement
re Cuba's recent actions. Rodrigo related that he
thought this was a constructive position for Sri Lanka
to take inasmuch as Fidel Castro had buttonholed GSL
representatives at the recent NAM summit in Malaysia,
pressing Sri Lanka to vote "no."

2. (C) The Ambassador replied that Sri Lanka's links
with NAM were well-known and were obviously important to
the government. That said, real issues were at stake in
this vote, i.e., a brutal crackdown by Castro's regime
on pro-democracy and other activists. Sri Lanka, as a
long-time democracy, should not allow NAM links to be
used so that Cuba, in effect, received favorable
treatment for its egregious activities. Reflecting,
Rodrigo responded that the GSL would mull over the issue
some more and get back to us.

3. (C) COMMENT: Through his last statement, Rodrigo
was not completely ruling out a change in Sri Lanka's
traditional decision to abstain on the Cuba vote. That
said, our guess is that this is a tough sell. Per
Ref B, we suggest that Department also raise the matter
with Minister Moragoda, who will be in Washington early
next week. END COMMENT.

4. (U) Minimize considered.

WILLS